



**RIS CHILD SAFEGUARDING  
CODE OF CONDUCT & POLICY**

# RIS CHILD SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

RIS is committed to the safety and protection of our students. All RIS employees have a professional and ethical obligation to ensure that our students experience a safe and nurturing environment in which they can grow and develop to their full potential and are protected from harm. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students includes:

- Protecting children from maltreatment and neglect
- Preventing impairment of children’s physical and mental health or development
- Ensuring that children are in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

This RIS Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct seeks to establish a set of core principles that are applicable to **anyone who works on campus at RIS, regardless of the precise nature of his or her job.** Henceforth these people will be referred to collectively as “RIS employees.” This includes, but is not limited to:

- Staff
- Faculty
- Classified Staff
- Janitorial/Custodial Staff
- Canteen Staff
- Drivers
- Outside Vendors, such as athletic coaches or EDP instructors

It is not possible to provide a comprehensive checklist of what is and is not appropriate behavior in all circumstances. There may be occasions when RIS employees have to make decisions in the best interests and welfare of the school and the children in their charge that could contravene this guidance or take its place where no such guidance exists. When this happens, transparency should be the default approach, and the incident should be reported to a school administrator as soon as possible.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

RIS employees must maintain appropriate confidentiality and not disclose information of a confidential nature, whether it was shared with them in confidence or acquired through a third party, without the consent of the person authorized to give it—unless they are required by law to do so or if disclosure may affect the safeguarding of a child. RIS employees should ask the relevant section administrator if they have concerns or questions about confidentiality.

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

RIS employees may work with students in multiple roles, such as teacher, coach, neighbor, family friend, parent of a friend, etc. RIS employees should avoid behaviors in one role that undermine their behaviors in another role. The onus is on each individual to use common sense and avoid interactions that could be construed as misconduct or abuse.

Specifically, RIS employees will:

- Ensure that all of their actions or behaviors place the welfare of students first.
- Take responsibility for their actions and behavior and avoid conduct that would lead any reasonable person to question their motivations or intentions.
- Make sure that their interactions with students are appropriate to the developmental age of the students.
- Assure that one-on-one time with a student takes place only when determined to be a necessary strategy to meet teaching, learning, or counseling outcomes.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure visibility to passers-by during any one-on-one time with a student.
- Model positive behavior and intervene when students are not acting or speaking appropriately.
- Refrain from using inappropriate language in front of students, including language that is harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, or culturally insensitive.
- Avoid acting in ways that may be considered abusive or that put a child at risk of exploitation, maltreatment, or abuse.
- Refrain from providing transportation to any RIS student without prior written permission from the student's parents/guardians. (Acceptable communication platforms include text, email, LINE, etc.)
- Never provide drugs or alcohol to students.
- Immediately disclose any charges, convictions, or other outcomes of an offense that relate to child exploitation or abuse that occurred either before or during their association with RIS.

## PHYSICAL TOUCH/CONTACT

At all times, RIS employees will:

- Use professional judgment about the appropriateness of any physical contact with a student.
- Be prepared to explain his or her actions and accept that any physical contact with a student is open to scrutiny.

- Use physical contact with children only if it is appropriate to the RIS employee's role and ensure that it occurs in a careful, sensitive, and respectful way.
- Not make gratuitous physical contact with students.
- Avoid attributing touching to their teaching style or as a way of relating to children.
- Not engage in romantic or sexual relationships in any form with children or current RIS students.
- Not use physical punishment or humiliation.
- Not carry out personal care that students can do for themselves (e.g., toileting or helping students change their clothes).
- Not engage in rough, physical, or sexually provocative games with students, including play wrestling.
- Not engage in or allow any form of inappropriate or unwanted touching.

## **USE OF STUDENT IMAGES AND IDENTIFYING INFORMATION**

RIS employees may take or use photographs or other media that include student images, exemplars of student work, and/or images of students taking part in a school event or activity. These photographs/media are used to provide RIS families with information about their child(ren)'s education and/or to provide information to other parties about RIS. Such images may be published on RIS-approved platforms.

Care must be taken by RIS employees in selecting such images to avoid potential inappropriate use by others. It is preferable to use images that depict an activity or group context, rather than featuring a particular student.

When photographing or filming a child or using children's images for RIS-related purposes, RIS employees must:

- Not take pictures of a child who says he/she does not want to be photographed.
- Not publish images of students online or in RIS print publications if his or her parents have formally withheld their permission on the RIS "Do Not Publish" form.
- Ensure that photographs, films, and videos present RIS students in a dignified and respectful manner.
- Ensure that file labels and/or text descriptions of photos do not reveal identifying information about a child (except first name) when sending images electronically or publishing images in any format. Exceptions to this include RIS publications, such as Ad Astra and the RIS Facebook page.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA & ONLINE CONTACT WITH CHILDREN**

RIS supports the use of media and social media as powerful tools of learning. However, connecting with a student socially via his or her personal social media account(s) may confuse students about the role of an RIS employee.

Therefore, RIS employees should:

- Connect with students only through RIS-approved sites and media platforms (e.g., Google Classroom, RIS email, PowerSchool, RIS Facebook, Seesaw, Blogger, professional Twitter accounts, approved LINE groups) for the purposes of supporting learning.
- Make any requests to use personal social media accounts in support of a specific learning or counseling context only. In the interest of transparency, this should be requested and approved through the appropriate section administrator.
- Ensure that their social media privacy settings do not allow students to view any inappropriate personal posts that could blur the line between professional and personal information.
- Be encouraged to speak up and report to the appropriate section administrator any concerns about the behavior of a colleague in relation to contact with children online.
- Not “friend,” “follow,” “like,” or otherwise interact with current or former students who are still in school through their personal social media accounts.

## **REPORTING: RAISING A CONCERN ABOUT SUSPECTED ABUSE**

RIS has a duty-to-report expectation of all RIS employees. This expectation allows any RIS employee to report a concern, in good faith, without fear of reprisal, victimization, or disadvantage. If any RIS employee has a concern about a student’s welfare, or if a student discloses that they are suffering abuse or reveals information that gives grounds for concern, the employee should speak to his or her section counselor within 24 hours of hearing about the concern. This is particularly important when the welfare of the student may be at risk. It is important that RIS employees raise an issue when it is a concern rather than waiting until the concern could become more serious.

## REPORTING: RAISING CONCERN ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF OTHERS

RIS employees have an ethical obligation to take reasonable steps to voice and/or report a concern or to consult with a section administrator about the welfare or safety of a child. RIS employees also have an ethical obligation to report on the conduct of others if there is a potential for harm to a child.

RIS will take all reasonable steps to protect any RIS employee who, in good faith:

- reports a concern about misconduct
- is the victim of misconduct
- witnesses suspected misconduct

This includes protection from retaliation, threats of retaliation, discharge, or discrimination directly related to the disclosure of such information.

Concerns may be raised with the person directly, with a principal or counselor, or with the school psychologist. A report of misconduct may be made to a section principal or supervisor. If a principal/supervisor is suspected of misconduct, a report should be made to the Head of School. If the Head of School is suspected of misconduct, a report should be made to the Director of the School. All reports of misconduct must reach the sectional administrator and the Head of School.

Parents will be notified as soon as possible by an administrator about any concerns regarding the welfare and safety of their child.

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Child abuse and neglect are of growing concern in schools throughout the world. Child abuse and neglect are violations of a child's human rights and are obstacles to the child's education as well as their physical, emotional, and spiritual development.

Schools fill a special institutional role in society as protectors of children. Schools need to ensure that all children in their care are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow and develop. Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children overtime, are in a unique position to identify children who need help and protection. As such, educators have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of help and protection and to take steps to ensure that the child and family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect.

All faculty and staff employed at Ruamrudee International School/Swiss Section must report suspected instances of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse or neglect. Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with administrative regulations respective to this policy. Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect maybe reported to the appropriate employer, to the respective consulate in Bangkok, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or to local authorities.

Ruamrudee International School/Swiss Section policy is guided by the Thai Child Protection Act of 2003, and endorses the Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which the host country, Thailand, is a signatory and seeks to be a safe haven for students who maybe experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives. Ruamrudee International School/Swiss Section will distribute this policy annually to all parents and applicants, will communicate this policy annually to students, will provide annual training for all staff, and will make every effort to implement hiring practices to ensure the safety of children. In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, Ruamrudee International School/Swiss Section will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process.

The RIS School Board/Swiss School Board endorses this Policy.

\*Source: Amnesty International Unofficial Summary of the UN Rights Convention of the Child: "<http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/children-s-rights/convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child>"

## HOW IS ABUSE AND NEGLECT DEFINED?

Definitions of abuse are complex and based in various cultures of child-rearing behaviors, gender and role responsibilities and expectations. The primary determination of abuse is that it is dependent on some form of a relationship that is used to meet the need of the more powerful person, either a member of the family, a teacher, or a friend. Research guides much of the definitions that are based in understanding the impact of certain behaviors.

### PHYSICAL ABUSE:

- Inflicting physical injury on a child by other than accidental means, causing skin bruising,
- Burns, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function, death; and/or
- Creating a substantial risk of physical harm to a child's bodily functioning; and/or
- Committing acts that are cruel or in- humane regardless of observable injury. Such acts may include, but are not limited to, instances of extreme discipline demonstrating a disregard of a child's pain and/or mental suffering; and/or
- Assaulting or criminally mistreating a child as defined by either the criminal code or school policy; and/or
- Engaging in actions or omissions resulting in injury to, or creating a substantial risk to the physical or mental health or development of a child; and/or
- Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any of the above.

### POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Unexplained bruises and welts on any part of the body
- Bruises of different ages (various colors)
- Injuries reflecting shape of article used (electric cord, belt, buckle, ping pong paddle, hand)
- Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation
- Unexplained burns, especially to soles, palms, back, or buttocks
- Burns with a pattern from an electric burner, iron, or cigarette
- Rope burns on arms, legs, neck, or torso
- Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child
- Immersion burns with a distinct boundary line
- Unexplained laceration, abrasions, or fractures



## EMOTIONAL ABUSE:

- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.
- It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.
- It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- It may refer to a situation where a child is put in an uncomfortable situation, which is inappropriate for both the adult and the child.

## NEGLECT:

Failure to provide for a child's basic needs within their own environment. Neglect may be:

- Physical (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision—this would include failure to provide proper adult guardianship such as leaving children unsupervised or living alone at home for any extended period of time. Note: RIS requires one parent be a full-time resident of Bangkok. Should parents/ guardian leave the country for any reason then the responsibility for informing the school of all appropriate contact details lies with the parent or guardian. Temporary Change of Guardian Forms are available from RIS. These are expected to be completed prior to parents/guardians leaving the country); and/or
- Medical (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment); and/or

- Emotional (e.g., a pattern of actions, such as: inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs, specific examples may include verbal humiliation, refusing to acknowledge presence of child, invasion of privacy for no specific reason, violent threats, etc.)

### **POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF NEGLECT**

- Child is unwashed or hungry
- Parents are uninterested in child's academic performance
- Parents do not respond to repeated communications from the school
- Child does not want to go home
- Both parents or legal guardian are absent from Bangkok for any period of 24 hours or greater
- Parents cannot be reached in

Behavioral indicators in and of themselves do not constitute abuse or neglect. Together with other indicators, such as family dynamics, they may warrant a referral.

### **SEXUAL ABUSE:**

Committing or allowing to be committed any sexual offense against a child as defined in either the criminal code of the host country or school policy, or intentionally touching either directly or through clothing, the genitals, anus, or breasts of a child for other than hygiene or child care purposes.

Sexual abuse has some different characteristics of child abuse that warrant special attention. While physical abuse is often the result of immediate stress and not usually planned, sexual abuse requires planning with results that are more insidious. The planning, referred to as Grooming, often results in victims accepting the blame, responsibility, guilt and shame for the sexual behavior of the offender. Sexual abuse requires far more secrecy than other forms of child abuse, so is more difficult to report.

Many victims, through the process of grooming, are taught that the sex is a form of love, so tend to love their offender and often present as happy and well-adjusted children with no negative symptoms because of their

perception of being loved. Working with the sexual offender cannot be done by school counselors.

### **POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

- Sexual knowledge, behavior, or use of language not appropriate to age level
- Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns
- Venereal disease in a child of any age
- Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to the oral, genital, or anal areas
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Refusing to change into PE clothes, fear of bathrooms
- Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaint
- Not wanting to be alone with an individual
- Pregnancy, especially at a young age
- Extremely protective parenting

### **What happens when a teacher has reasonable cause to believe?**

These indicators of abuse and neglect will be used by the staff member as a guideline for reporting to the counselor or Section administrator who then refers to the Pupil Services Director, who will determine if the case needs further attention.

A report must be made when a staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect. All reports are confidential.

### **What happens after suspected abuse or neglect is reported?**

**Where there is cause to suspect** child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the faculty and staff member to report their suspicions to the counselor, the school psychologist or to the section administrator. In all cases, the section administrator will be notified. It is the responsibility of the section administrator to inform the Head of School and Director of Student Support of the suspected case of child abuse or neglect.

All staff, faculty and administrators are mandated to report incidences of abuse and neglect. All RIS employees are also required to report suspicion

of abuse or neglect. All reports of abuse and neglect must be made to the counselor immediately.

## **Procedures for reporting suspected cases of child abuse or neglect**

### **Step 1:**

When a child reports abuse or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring, the teacher will seek advice from the section administrator, section level counselor and /or school psychologist immediately. The counselor will take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident and will form a school-based response team as needed to address the report. The response team will include the School Director, Head of School, Pupil Services Director, counselor, psychologist, Section administrator and other individuals as the administrator and Head of School/ Pupil Services Director sees fit. In all cases, follow up activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained. The following procedure will be used:

1. Interview staff members as necessary and document information relative to the case.
2. Consult with school personnel to review the child's history in the school.
3. Report status of case to Head of School and Pupil Services Director.
4. Determine the course of follow-up actions.

### **Step 2:**

Based on acquired information, a plan of action will be developed to assist the child and family. Actions that may take place are:

- Discussions between the child and counselor in order to gain more information. Depending upon the age of the child, these discussions may include drawing pictures and playing with dolls to elicit more information as to what may have occurred.
- In-class observations of the child by the teacher, counselor, psychologist or administrator.
- Meetings with the family to present the School's concerns.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling.
- Notification of the management of the sponsoring employer of the concern with the child/family, or to the welfare office at the home-of-record.
- Consultation with the consulate of the country of the involved family.
- Consultation with the school or another attorney.
- Informal consultation with local authorities.
- Consultation with Child Line or other Child Protection agencies.

**Most cases of suspected abuse or neglect will be handled by school psychologists and school counselors, such as those involving:**

- Student relationships with peers
- Parenting skills related to disciplining children at home
- Student-parent relationships
- Mental health issues such as depression, low self-esteem, grieving.

**Some cases will be referred to outside resources, for example:**

- Mental health issues such as depression, psychosis, dissociation, and suicide ideation.

**Cases reported for investigation and outside resources:**

- Severe and ongoing physical abuse or neglect
- Sexual abuse and incest.

**In extreme cases when families do not stop the abuse or concerns remain about the safety of the child, reports could be made to:**

- The consulate
- The employer
- Childline

### **Step 3:**

Subsequent to a reported and/or substantiated case of child abuse or neglect:

- The school psychologist and/or counselor will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- The psychologist and/or counselor will provide the child's teachers and the section administrator with ongoing support.
- The counselor will provide resource materials and strategies for teacher use.
- The counselor will maintain contact with outside therapists to update the progress of the child in school.
- Police

All documentation of the investigation will be kept in the child's school confidential records file. Records sent to schools to which their student may transfer will be flagged to let the receiving school know there is a confidential file for the child.

## Employment

### **Demand police clearances where possible and Applicant Interviews**

Experts agree that it is difficult or nearly impossible, to identify a child sex offender in the selection process. There are no conclusive sex offender profiles and no distinguishing characteristics. Keep in mind that a child sexual abuse offender could be anyone. Even though it is a complex area, do not stop looking for signs.

We are interested in attitudes to children not just trying to detect whether this person might be an offender or not.

An open question to ask of all potential employees is;

#### **For Administrators, Teachers and Staff that work directly with children;**

How does having a Child Protection Policy in place in schools help to keep children safe from emotional, physical and sexual abuse?

Listen for a detailed answer that demonstrates a solid understanding of and commitment to child protection and the role that school play.

Listen carefully for worrying attitudes towards children that may emerge from this question.

Ask further questions that seem appropriate to follow up from the candidate's initial responses.

#### **For Classified Staff and Janitors, Maintenance, garden and other general staff;**

Quote Articles 25/26 from the Thai Child Protection Act 2003.

Ask in culturally and educationally appropriate language about their attitudes to these articles.

Ask follow-up questions that are suggested by the initial response.

ALL CANDIDATES FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL POSITIONS AT RIS AND SWISS SECTION MUST HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL AND SATISFACTORY CONVERSATION THAT ADDRESSES CHILD PROTECTION MATTERS.

**DISCLOSURE**



**TEACHER ↔ COUNSELOR ↔ ADMINISTRATOR/SECTION HEAD**



**Reasonable Cause?**



**Yes → Informs Building Administrator ↔ Informs Pupil Services**



**Response Team**



**Investigation**



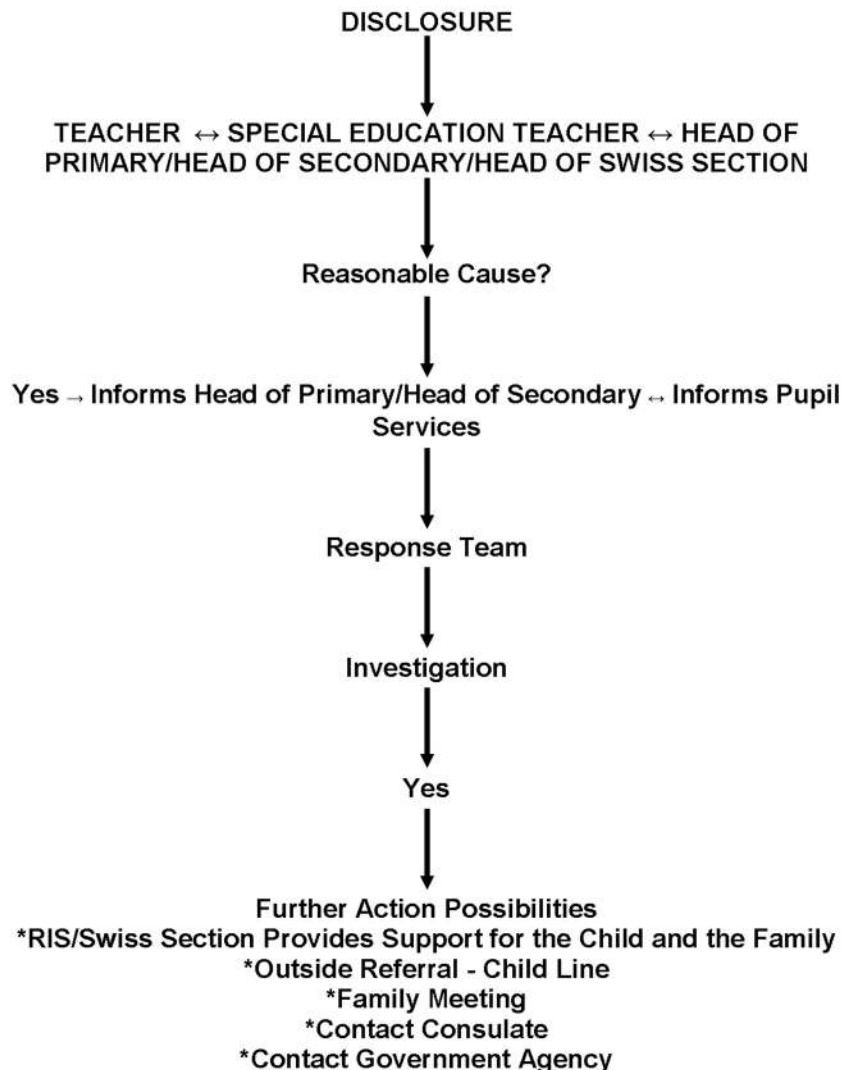
**Yes**



**Further Action Possibilities**

- \*RIS Provides Support for the Child and the Family**
- \*Outside Referral - Child Line**
- \*Family Meeting**
- \*Contact Consulate**
- \*Contact Government Agency**

## Swiss Section Procedure

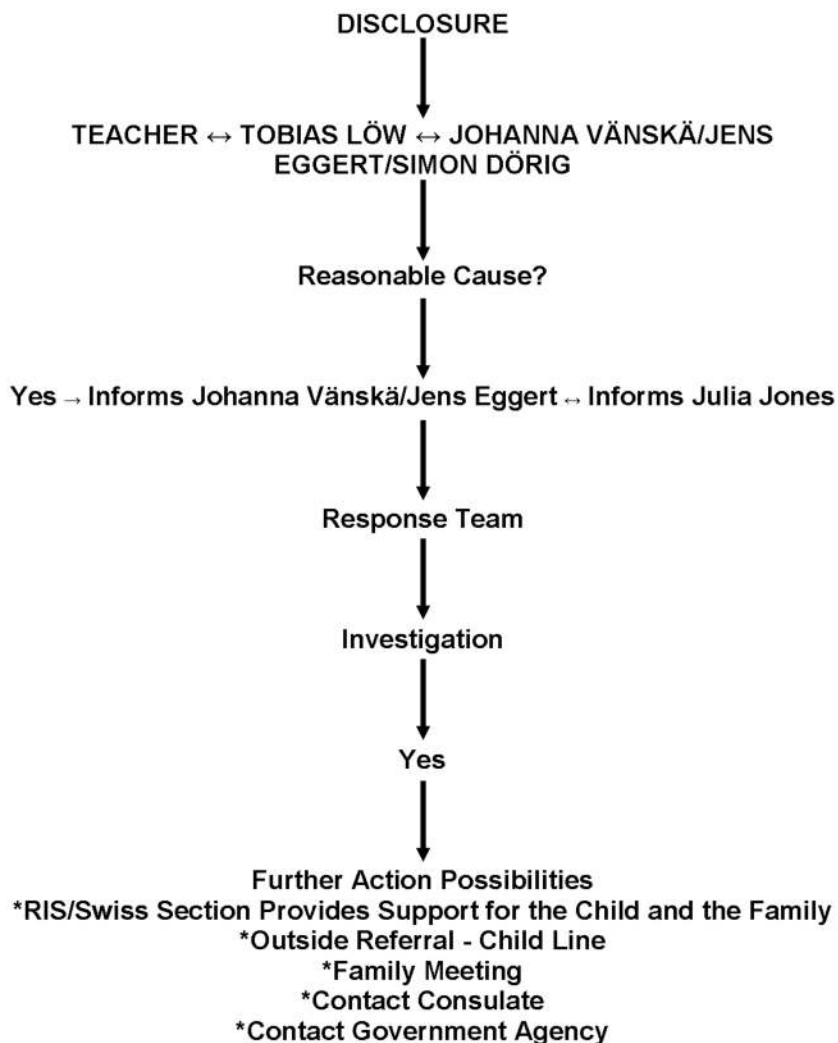


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## Appendix 1

### CHILD PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 19 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD PER THAI LAW

A Child Protection Policy is important in schools for prevention, intervention and healing. This includes educating parents and teachers, providing information and resources. It is also our obligation, in loco parentis, to protect children as Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states and current Thai law states:

#### Article 19: Protection from Abuse and Neglect:

No one should hurt the child in any way. Even the parents have no right to hurt the child. Adults should make sure that the child is protected from abuse, violence and neglect.

#### Article 34: Sexual Abuse:

Every child has the right to be protected from sexual abuse. This means that nobody can do anything to the child's body that s/he does not want them to do, such as touching, taking pictures and making the child say things that s/he does not want to say.

\*Source: Convention on the Rights of the Child

#### Article 25:

Parents or guardians are forbidden to treat a child in ways or manners which constitute unlawful caring.

#### Article 26:

A person is forbidden to: Commit or omit acts which result in torturing a child's body or mind.

\*Source: Thai Child Protection Act 2003